

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 10, 20, 37 and 38 are pending, with Claims 10 and 20 being independent. Claims 1, 5-7, 11, 15-17, 33 and 35 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 10, 20 and 37 have been amended. Applicants submit that support for these amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 10, 20, 37, and 38 were rejected under 35.U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,337,882 (Boyer et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,661,455 (Toyofuku et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 10, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the features (i) a storage unit configured to store a plurality of compressed partial images obtained by dividing a panoramic image by a predetermined angular field of view, each panoramic image corresponding to a different viewpoint, (ii) a selection unit configured to select compressed partial images based on information about a position and a direction of a viewpoint, (iii) a decompression unit configured to decompress the compressed partial images selected by the selection unit, and (iv) a drawing unit configured to rotate each of the decompressed partial images by 90° and draw the rotated partial images in a successive memory space. With these features, an output image corresponding to the position and direction of a designated viewpoint can then be easily output by designating a start pixel address and an end pixel address of the output image (as disclosed, for example, at least at page 31, lines 16-26 of the specification with respect to Fig. 18B).

More specifically, in order to join portions of images extracted from two decompressed images in a conventional technique, the two decompressed images must be drawn in a successive memory space, the portions to be joined must be extracted from the two image independently, and then the extracted portions must be drawn in another memory space in order to join the extracted portions. In contrast, with the features of Claim 10 discussed above, the joined image is obtained by rotating decompressed partial images by 90 degrees and drawing them in a successive memory space, and then directly extracting the joined image from the two partial images by designating the start pixel address and the end pixel address. Thus, the joined image can be obtained more quickly and easily than with the conventional technique.

Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of Claim 10. The Office Action concedes that Boyer et al. fails to disclose at least the feature of rotating partial images, and relies upon Toyofuku et al. as disclosing that feature (citing col. 10, lines 46-57). However, Applicants respectfully submit that Toyofuku et al. fails to disclose or suggest at least the claimed rotating feature. That patent teaches a photographing mode in which a plurality of images are photographed, as shown in Figs. 16 and 17, by rotating a camera. However, in Toyofuku et al. the discussion of rotating a camera merely refers to panning or tilting of a camera, not to rotation of decompressed partial images that were previously stored in memory.

Accordingly, none of the cited art discloses or suggests at least the feature of rotating each of the decompressed partial images by 90 degrees, as recited in Claim 10, and therefore that claim is patentable over the cited art.

Independent Claim 20 is a method claim that recites features similar to those of apparatus Claim 10, and Claim 20 is believed patentable for reasons similar to Claim 10. The

dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

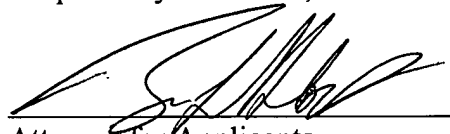
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Request for Personal Interview

Applicants believe that a personal interview would be beneficial to advance prosecution of this application. When the Examiner takes up this case for action, Applicants respectfully request, if the Examiner does not deem these amendments and remarks to place the application in allowable condition, that the Examiner telephone Applicants' undersigned representative to schedule a personal interview.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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